

Amended Claims

Claims:

1. (cancelled)
2. (cancelled)
3. (cancelled)
4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)
6. (cancelled)
7. (cancelled)

8. (currently amended) In the luggage case of claim ~~2349~~ wherein the fabric and the foam layer are laminated to one another to form a laminated panel having a periphery, the periphery of the panel having an edge portion upstanding from the major dimension of the panel, the extreme edge of the peripheral edge portion having a cut edge, the cut edge being hidden by the injection molded frame attached thereto.

9. (currently amended) In a luggage case having at least one outer shell, the shell in turn having a generally broad face, this broad face formed of a fabric panel, the improvement comprising an injection molded frame attached to an edge of the fabric panel, and an autogenously formed bond between the frame and the edge of the fabric panel, wherein the autogenously formed bond is formed during the manufacturing of the frame, and wherein the autogenously formed bond between the frame and fabric panel extends around substantially the entire periphery of the panel, and effects a tidy, seamless mating of the panel and the frame whereby the autogenously formed bond remains generally hidden from a user and wherein the panel further includes a layer of textile fabric and a layer of a foam polymer and has a thickness dimension perpendicular to the major dimension

and generally equal to the thickness of the fabric and the foam layer, but the thickness of the extreme edge thereof being substantially less than the thickness dimension.

10. (cancelled)

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) In a luggage case having at least one outer shell, this shell in turn having a generally broad face, this broad face formed of a fabric panel with edge portions surrounding its periphery, the improvement comprising an injection molded frame attached to and extending beyond the edge portion of the fabric panel, and an autogenously formed bond between the frame and the edge portion of the fabric panel, wherein the autogenously formed bond is formed during the manufacturing of the frame, and results in a seamless, hidden joint between said panel and said frame as well as a smooth, taut surface of said panel wherein the frame comprises a series of relatively thin upstanding walls and a relatively thick edge portion adjacent the series of walls, the relatively thick portion including said autogenous bond.

20. (previously presented) In the luggage case of claim 19 wherein the upstanding series of walls consist of a back wall, a front wall, and side walls extending between the front wall and the back wall.

21. (previously presented) In the luggage case of claim 20 wherein the back wall includes integrally formed hinges for hingedly attaching the shell to the rest of the luggage case.

22. (previously presented) In the luggage case of claim 19 wherein the upstanding front wall includes at least one latching device for selectively holding the shell to the rest of the luggage case.

23. (previously presented) In the luggage case of claim 19 wherein the fabric panel includes a layer of textile fabric and a layer of foam polymer to stiffen the textile fabric layer.

24. (new) In the luggage case of claim 19 wherein the peripheral edge of the panel is positioned against an inner surface of said frame.

25. (new) In the luggage case of claim 19 wherein the panel comprises a continuous invagination that extends around an inner surface of the panel adjacent to the edge portion of the panel, said invagination being dimensioned to accommodate shrinkage between the hot injection molded peripheral frame and the relatively dimensionally stable panel such that said panel, once said injection molded frame has cooled, is smooth and undistorted in structure.

26. (new) In the luggage case of claim 25 wherein said panel consists of a second invagination.

27. (new) In a luggage case having at least one outer shell, the shell having a generally broad face, this broad face formed of a panel having edge portions that comprise a periphery, the improvement comprising an invagination along an edge of the panel dimensioned such that the panel can move and stretch thereby maintaining a smooth, wrinkle-free, visually appealing appearance and durable structure after the panel has been autogenously affixed, without visible seams and without visible attachment means, to the shell that has been injection molded in direct contact with the panel.

28. (new) In the luggage case of claim 27, wherein said shell further comprises smooth, rounded corners.

29. (new) In the luggage case of claim 27, wherein said shell further comprises three-sided, triangularly-shaped corners, inherent to clamshell-type luggage cases.

30. (new) In the luggage case of claim 19 wherein the thick edge portion of the frame comprises a hollow peripheral line of beading that is adjacent the peripheral edge of the panel, said thick edge portion sized to optimize the flow of the molten material during injection molding so that a secure positioning between the thickened portion of the frame and the panel is maintained, resulting in a strong bond between the frame and the panel that results in a smooth exterior surface of said panel once the molten material has cooled.